REMARKS

The examiner is thanked for the performance of a thorough search and for the indication of allowable subject matter – namely, Claims 4, 10, 19, and 24. By this amendment, Claims 7-12 have been amended. Claim 15 has been canceled. No claims have been added. Hence, Claims 1-14 and 16-26 are pending in the application. The amendments to the claims as indicated herein do not add any new matter to this application. Furthermore, amendments made to the claims as indicated herein have not been made for the purpose of overcoming alleged prior art.

Each issue raised in the Office Action mailed November 2, 2006 is addressed hereinafter.

I. ISSUES NOT RELATING TO PRIOR ART

Claims 7-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is allegedly addressed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 7-12 have been amended as suggested by the Office Action. Removal of the 35 U.S.C. § 101 with respect to Claims 7-12 is respectfully requested.

II. ISSUES RELATING TO PRIOR ART

A. CLAIMS 1-3, 5, 7-9, 11, 13-18, 20-21, 23, AND 25

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-9, 11, 13-18, 20-21, 23, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,865,605 to Soderberg et al. ("*Soderberg*"). The rejection is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

1. Claim 1

Claim 1 recites, among other things:

A method for masking differences among a plurality of servers providing similar services over a network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving, at an application switching component from a requesting process, a request for a service among the similar services, **wherein the request includes data indicating a particular service extension is mandatory**

...

Soderberg fails to teach or suggest at least the above bolded portion of Claim 1. The Office Action asserts on page 3 that col. 8, lines 23-25 of *Soderberg* discloses the above bolded portion of Claim 1. This is incorrect. That cited portion of *Soderberg* merely states: "During this time delay [between when email content is moved from server B 260 to server A 250], front-end server 240 continues to direct requests for the email content of email client A 210 to server B 260."

This portion of *Soderberg* does not teach or suggest that the request, from the client A (i.e., the alleged requesting process) to front-end server 240 (i.e., the alleged application switching component), includes data that indicates a particular service extension is necessary. In fact, **the entire *Soderberg* reference** fails to teach or suggest **service extensions**, much less that the request (from the requesting process) includes data indicating a particular service extension is necessary. One reason for this fundamental failure is that the invention of *Soderberg* solves the problem of redirecting requests **for content**, where the content has been moved to other servers (see Abstract and col. 1, lines 28-39). In contrast, Claim 1 and the corresponding application are directed toward "masking differences among a plurality of servers providing **similar services** over a network." The email servers of *Soderberg* all provide the **same** service (i.e., email service), not similar services. Therefore, there is no need for a request from client A 210 of

Soderberg to include data (in the request for email content) that indicates that a **particular service extension** is mandatory, as Claim 1 recites.

Because *Soderberg* fails to teach or suggest at least the above bolded feature of Claim 1, a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is improper. Therefore, removal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejection with respect to Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

2. Remaining Independent Claims

Independent Claims 7, 13-14, and 16 are, respectively, a computer-readable medium, apparatus, apparatus, system, and method claim. Each of Claims 7, 13-14, and 16 recite features discussed above that distinguish Claim 1 from the cited references. For example, each of Claims 7, 13-14, and 16 state that the request from the requesting process to the application switching component includes data that indicates that a particular service extension is mandatory. Therefore, each of Claims 7, 13-14, and 16 is allowable for the reasons given above with respect to Claim 1.

3. Claims 2-3, 5, 8-9, 11, 17-18, 20-21, 23, and 25

Claims 2-3, 5, 8-9, 11, 17-18, 20-21, 23, and 25 are dependent claims, each of which depends (directly or indirectly) on one of the independent claims discussed above. Each of Claims 2-3, 5, 8-9, 11, 17-18, 20-21, 23, and 25 is therefore allowable for the reasons given above for the claim on which it depends. In addition, each of Claims 2-3, 5, 8-9, 11, 17-18, 20-21, 23, and 25 introduces one or more additional limitations that independently render it patentable. However, due to the fundamental differences already identified, to expedite the positive resolution of this case a separate discussion of those limitations is not included at this time, although the Applicants reserve the right to further point out the differences between the cited art and the novel features recited in the dependent claims.

B. CLAIMS 2-3, 8-9, 17-18, AND 22-23

Although Claims 2-3, 8-9, 17-18, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), Claims 2-3, 8-9, 17-18, and 23 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Soderberg*, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,678,717 to Schneider et al. ("*Schneider*"). Claim 22 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Soderberg* in view of *Schneider*. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2-3, 8-9, 17-18, and 22-23 are dependent claims, each of which depends (directly or indirectly) on one of the independent claims discussed above. Each of Claims 2-3, 8-9, 17-18, and 22-23 is therefore allowable for the reasons given above for the claim on which it depends. In addition, each of Claims 2-3, 8-9, 17-18, and 22-23 introduces one or more additional limitations that independently render it patentable. However, due to the fundamental differences already identified, to expedite the positive resolution of this case a separate discussion of those limitations is not included at this time, although the Applicants reserve the right to further point out the differences between the cited art and the novel features recited in the dependent claims.

C. CLAIMS 6, 12, 21, AND 26

Claims 6, 12, 21, and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Soderberg*, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,092,100 to Berstis et al. ("*Berstis*"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6, 12, 21, and 26 are dependent claims, each of which depends (directly or indirectly) on one of the independent claims discussed above. Each of Claims 6, 12, 21, and 26 is therefore allowable for the reasons given above for the claim on which it depends. In addition, each of Claims 6, 12, 21, and 26 introduces one or more additional limitations that independently render it patentable. However, due to the fundamental differences already identified, to expedite

the positive resolution of this case a separate discussion of those limitations is not included at this time, although the Applicants reserve the right to further point out the differences between the cited art and the novel features recited in the dependent claims.

III. CONCLUSIONS & MISCELLANEOUS

For the reasons set forth above, all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone relating to any issue that would advance examination of the present application.

A petition for extension of time, to the extent necessary to make this reply timely filed, is hereby made. If applicable, a law firm check for the petition for extension of time fee is enclosed herewith. If any applicable fee is missing or insufficient, throughout the pendency of this application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to any applicable fees and to credit any overpayments to our Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,
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